Supreme Court dated 2.3.2001, in the claim cases which were dismissed in default or due to non-appearance, the claimants were given an opportunity to file applications for restoration of their cases. As a result, 42,053 claimants filed restoration applications. Out of restored cases, 37,963 cases have been disposed of leaving a balance of 4,090 cases for disposal. In addition, some appeals and revision petitions are also pending.

Disposal of cases of Bhopal gas tragedy

3359. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) by when all the cases of Bhopal gas tragedy would be settled;

(b) by when the office of the Welfare Commissioner would be dismantled;

(c) whether if is a fact that more money is spent on the office of the Welfare Commissioner than that on the compensation amount;

(d) the total amount of money available with Government, as on date, for relief and rehabilitation of gas victims of Bhopal; and

(e) how that money would be used?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) According to information received from the office of the Welfare Commissioner, the original cases are likely to be disposed of by the end of June, 2002. However, appeals and revision petitions are likely to be disposed of within 2 years.

(b) Decision about dismantling of the office of the Welfare Commissioner will be taken after all the claim cases are disposed of.

(c) No, Sir. According to information sent by the office of the Welfare Commissioner, Rs. 1522.36 crore has been awarded as compensation upto 31.3.2002 whereas the expenditure on the office of the Welfare Commissioner, Bhopal Gas Victims, Bhopal is only Rs. 46.01 crore upto 31.3.2002.

(d) and (e) According to information given by the Reserve Bank of India, a sum of Rs. 475.76 crore is the balance in dollar component as on 26.3.2002. This amount, in accordance with the order of the Supreme Court is earmarked for payment of compensation only. For the medical, social, economic and environmental rehabilitation of Bhopal gas victims, the Central Government had approved a five year Action Plan in 1990 with a total outlay of Rs. 163.10 crore which was increased in stages to Rs. 258 crore. This outlay was to be

shared between the Government of India and the State Government of Madhya Pradesh in the ratio of 75:25. The Central Government has already released its entire share of Rs. 193.50 crore.

Removal of control on drugs

3360. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the drug manufacturers are demanding to completely do away with controls; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Various suggestions have been made by the pharmaceutical industry regarding the pricing of drugs, which, *inter-alia,* include complete decontrol of the pharma industry. The Government have recently announced the 'Pharmaceutical Policy-2002' taking into account:

(i) the essentiality of improving incentives for research and development in the Indian pharmaceutical industry, to enable the industry to achieve sustainable growth particularly in view of anticipated changes in the Patent Law; and

(ii) the need for reducing further the rigours of price control particularly in view of the ongoing process of liberalization.

The main objectives of this Policy are, *inter alia,* ensuring abundant availability at reasonable prices within the country of good quality essential pharmaceuticals of mass consumption and strengthening the indigenous capability for cost effective quality production.

Subsidized drugs for AIDS

3361. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cheap, subsidized Indian drugs are being used by Nigeria to control AIDS; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the programme proposed to provide similar subsidized drugs in India, to help poor patients, especially in rural areas, through international aid as well as co- operation of manufacturing firms, like Cipla and Ranbaxy?